at the instance of the Municipal Council which proposes to introduce electric lighting of the streets; and the Alleppey Council too is contemplating an electric supply scheme.

Neendakara Bridge.

23. As a first step in connecting Trivandrum with Cochin by a land route, the Quilon-Alleppey road was made and this was followed by the Alleppey-Arur road. The road lies across the bar at Neendakara and this has now to be crossed in a *junghar*. This is at all times slow work and in certain parts of the year attended with risk. The Government therefore decided to construct a bridge across the bar and the work which was started in August 1928 has been almost completed. It is expected that the bridge can be opened for traffic within the next month. With this, the road from Trivandrum to the Travancore frontier at Arur will be continuous but for a *junghar* crossing at Tottapally and Government propose to take up immediately the question of constructing a bridge there.

Forests.

24. There was a decrease of 1·2 square miles in the total area of the State reserved forests due mainly to the disafforestation, for purposes of assignment, of 1,155 acres from two reserves. More than one million and a quarter cubic feet of timber was extracted from the forests and sold for Rs. 14·58 lakhs, which was an increase of nearly Rs. 60,000 over the corresponding figure for the previous year. There was a slight fall in the net revenue of the department due mainly to the larger refunds of *kudivila*. The work of artificial regeneration of timber areas in the forests was also being carefully attended to and a fresh extent of 575·64 acres was leased out during the year under the *Taungya* system for planting teak. There has been some complaint that the free-pass rules as they are now worked cause hardship to the people. At the last budget session of the Legislative Council, it was suggested that the rules may be confined in their operation to areas which, on account of their proximity to Government forests, require to be specially watched for the conservation of Government timber. Accordingly the Government have appointed a mixed committee of officials and non-officials to demarcate the area that may, without danger to Government timber, be excluded from the operation of the free-pass rules.

Free-pass Rules.

Salt.

25. Arrangements were made from the beginning of 1104 with a view to popularise home salt and to enable the licensees of the factories working under the modified excise system to dispose of their share of the salt more easily. The licensees had till then to pay the duty before removing the salt from the factories for sale and this together with the cost of transport to the centres of sale meant the investment of large capital. Pre-payment of duty has now been dispensed with and licensees are permitted to remove the salt under bond to the Government depots at Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey on deposit of a com-

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paratively small amount as security, the duty being left to be realised at the time of the actual sale. A total quantity of 166,948 maunds was removed to Alleppey by the licensees during 1104 under this arrangement.

Excise.

26. In accordance with the avowed policy of Government to promote temperance, advantage was taken of the opportunity afforded by the renewal of the biennial abkari contracts from the beginning of 1104 to reduce the number of country liquor (toddy and arrack) shops from 1,832 to 1,744 or by nearly five per cent. The rates of tree tax for cocoanut and palmyra were enhanced throughout the State and that for *choondapana* in the *pakuthies* on the Cochin frontier. The rates of duty on jaggery arrack and cocoanut toddy arrack were also enchanced. The price of ganja issued from treasuries to independent shop-keepers was raised from Bh.Rs.27-8 annas to Bh.Rs.30 per seer from the 1st April 1929. The system of local option was introduced experimentally in the Changanacherry Municipality in 1104. About 90 per cent. of the Municipal voters declared themselves in favour of the closing of liquor shops in the town.

Local Option.

Government accepted the decision of this large majority and ordered the shops to be closed tentatively, till the end of 1105. In order to afford greater facility for carrying out the spirit of this act of abstention on the part of the people the Government of its own accord ordered the only foreign liquor shop in the town also to be closed and reduced to two drams the quantity of arrack that could be possessed or transported without a license. The experiment is being watched with great interest.

Public Health.

27. Since the close of 1104, two new dispensaries and six new conservancy stations have been established. The outstanding feature, however, of public health activities in the State during the year was the adoption of a programme of public health work for the year 1105 presented by Dr. Jacocks, the representative of the Rockefeller Foundation. After a preliminary study of the local conditions, Dr. Jacocks prepared a comprehensive scheme of public health work as well as a modest programme of work to be carried out during the current year. This programme has been sanctioned and the work commenced. It comprises the survey of hookworm and malaria, entomological research on malaria, filariasis and plague, public health education and propaganda, maternity and child welfare, and the organisation of health units. The last two items are to be tried experimentally and their continuance and extension will depend upon the successful results of their practical working and the extent of the funds that could be made available in future years. Mr. M. K. Gopala Pillai, Superintendent, Vaccine Depot, and Mr. N. Krishnan Tampi, Health Officer under the Trivandrum Municipal Council, have been deputed to America for special training in public health for one year, the former on a fellow-

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